

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

AID-05 SCA-01 OPR-02 ACDA-05 OMB-01 /072 W

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R 131154Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9524

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FOLLOWING IS CHIANG MAI 0196 SENT ACTION BANGKOK 11 AUG,
REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION:

QUOTE

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJECT: STUDENT SYMPATHY RALLY OVER ARRESTS OF
NORTHERN ACTIVISTS.

1. SUMMARY: STUDENT DEMONSTRATION PROTESTING ARRESTS IN
LAMPHUN AND MURDERS OF FARM LEADERS IS ON WANE AS CM
UNIV STUDENT COUNCIL HAS URGED RETURN TO CLASSES. NEVER-
THELESS, LOCAL GOVT HAS SUFFERED EMBARRASSMENT OF NATIONAL
ATTENTION WHICH HAS DAMAGED CITIZEN CONFIDENCE IN ITS
ABILITY TO PROVIDE PROTECTION FROM LAWLESS ELEMENTS AND
MAY LEAD TO FURTHER ASSIGNMENT SHAKE-UP AMONG PROVINCIAL
OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER FIVE DAYS OF LUKE-WARM DEMONSTRATIONS, CM UNIV
STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ASKED BY STUDENT COUNCIL TO RETURN TO
CLASSES AUG 11. ALL EXCEPT MEDICAL STUDENTS AND TTC ARE
REPORTEDLY COMPLYING ALTHOUGH SOME MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED
DIFFICULTY GAINING PHYSICAL ENTRY THIS MORNING AS LOCKS
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ON CLASSROOM DOORS HAD BEEN JAMMED WITH BAMBOO STICKS.

COURSE OF DEMONSTRATION AT THA PAE GATE SAW CROWDS NUMBERING APPROXIMATELY 600 ON FIRST EVENING (AUG 6) WITH ONLY 10 HAVING KEPT VIGIL THROUGHOUT THAT NIGHT. NEXT EVENING DREW SMALLER CROWD WHICH EXPERIENCED INJURIES TO FIVE PARTICIPANTS WHEN BOMB WAS THROWN BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS. PARTICIPANTS HAVE NOW MOVED TO SAFER GROUND OF SALA KLANG WHERE SOME 75 PEOPLE REMAIN AS OF NOON AUG 11.

3. CHANGE IN COURSE OF CM UNIV SUPPORT FOR DEMONSTRATION WAS PROMPTED BY REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS FACULTIES WHO WENT TO LAMPHUN TO GATHER FACTS ON ARRESTS. AT AUL 8 MEETING STUDENT COUNCIL DECIDED TO URGE RE-OPENING OF CLASSES AND PASSED THREE-POINT RESOLUTION DEMANDING THAT GOVERNMENT CONDUCT OPEN INVESTIGATION FARMERS' KILLINGS, STATING THAT COUNCIL AGREED TO COURT HANDLING CHARGES AGAINST THOSE ARRESTED AND URGING THAT ALL STUDENTS BE VIGILANT IN SEEING THAT JUSTICE BE DONE IN TRIALS OF THE ARRESTED.

4. ALTHOUGH MAIN THRUST OF DEMONSTRATION WAS DISSIPATED, ATTENTION DROWN TO NORTH HAS NOT BEEN FAVORABLE, AND MAY LEAD TO A SHAKE-UP IN PROVINCIAL OFFICES HERE. BANGKOK HAS ALREADY THREATENED RELEASE OF PROVINCIAL POLICE COMMANDERS IF THEY CANNOT STAVE MURDERS. CONSULATE HAS ALSO LEARNED THAT SEVERAL GOVERNORS WILL SOON BE TRANSFERRED--CHIANG RAI AND CHIANG MAI HAVE BEEN MENTIONED IN ADDITION TO LAMPHUN--WHICH MAY BE RELATED TO BANGKOK DISCONTENT WITH UP-COUNTRY PRACTICES.

THERE PERHAPS IS NO CONNECTION WITH HIS HANDLING OF FARMERS' DISCONTENT, BUT GOV. ASA, WHO AS RECENTLY AS LAST WEEK TOLD CONSUL HE EXPECTED TO STAY CHIANG MAI AT LEAST ONE YEAR MORE, IS NOW SLATED TO BECOME DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF DOLA (TO BE REPLACED BY A MR. CHALAW, DEPUTY DG RURAL ADMIN MIN. INT. AND VICE RECTOR NAI AMPHUR ACADEMY BANGKOK).

5. REACTIONS AMONG LOCAL POPULATION TO DEMONSTRATIONS HAS GENERALLY BEEN NEGATIVE. USIS BPAO LEARNED THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOCAL NEWSPAPER EDITORS MET OVER WEEKEND TO CONSIDER EMBARGO OF REPORTING ON LOCAL DEMONSTRATION IN ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE STUDENTS FROM CONTINUING PROTEST AND RESTORE CALM TO CITY. PAPERS CONTINUE TO CARRY STORIES, HOWEVER, SO WE CAN ONLY ASSUME UNPRECEDENTED STEP WAS NOT TAKEN.

6. ON SATURDAY THERE APPEARED IN DOWNTOWN AREA POSTERS

URGING STUDENTS TO END DEMONSTRATION. ASKED BY CONSUL WHO WAS PAYING FOR PUBLICITY, MAYOR RUANG NIMMANHAEMIN BLAMED IT ON GENERAL KRIT SAWARA SAYING KRIT IS UNWISELY DISPENSING MONEY TO EXTREMIST GROUPS OF LEFT AND RIGHT, THUS KEEPING POLITICAL POT BOILING. DEPUTY BPP AREA 5 COMMANDER LT. COL. PIMON CONJECTURED, HOWEVER, THAT KGB HAS EXPANDED ACTIVITIES IN NORTH AND IS INFLUENTIAL IN STIRRING UP CURRENT DISCONTENT. (NOTE: THIS IS FIRST OCCASION WE HAVE HEARD CONCERN EXPRESSED BY PIMON ABOUT KGB UP-COUNTRY ACTIVITIES.)

7. ONE MINOR REPERCUSSION IS WAVE OF CONCERN AMONG WEALTHY ABOUT POSSIBLE KIDNAPPINGS THEIR CHILDREN. AN EXCLUSIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LAST WEEK REPORTEDLY RECEIVED CALL WARNING THERE PLANS AFOOT TO KIDNAP CHILDREN OF LANDHOLDERS. SINCE THIS OCCURRED AT SAME TIME AS TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN KUALA LUMPUR WERE BEING MUCH PUBLICIZED, PARENTS FEARED THEIR CHILDREN MIGHT BE TAKEN HOSTAGES AGAINST RELEASE OF THE NINE ARRESTED. SEVERAL SCHOOLS SUBSEQUENTLY ASKED THAT PARENTS THEMSELVES FETCH CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL RATHER THEN RELY UPON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

8. COMMENT: WHILE GOVT APPEARS TO HAVE WEATHERED THIS LATEST PROTEST, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT NEWLY-AWAKENED POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF FARMERS WILL BE CONTINUING PROBLEM. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW LAND REFORM ACT, TENANT-LANDLORD BITTERNESS, DISPUTES OVER WATER RIGHTS, LACK OF ARABLE LAND FOR GROWING POPULATION, AND PLETHORA OF OTHER FARM PROBLEMS DEFY AMICABLE SOLUTIONS. EARLY IN CURRENT DISPUTE RTG NOTED FEDERATIONS OF FARMERS, UNLIKE THOSE OF WORKERS (WHICH COME UNDER LABOR PROTECTION ACT OF 1972), ARE NOT AUTHORIZED BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANY PARTICULAR LEGISLATION. IMPLICATION WAS THEIR LEADERS, SINCE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN REGISTERED WITH OR CLEARED BY MIN. INTERIOR AS HAVE LABOR LEADERS, ARE NOT EASY TO IDENTIFY AND PROTECT. OUTCOME OF CURRENT UPROAR MIGHT BE NEW LEGISLATION EXTENDING RTG RECOGNITION, PROTECTION, AND (IMPLIED) "GUIDANCE" TO FARMER GROUPS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARRESTS, STUDENT GROUPS, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO16721
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750279-0852
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750854/aaaabvhy.tel
Line Count: 165
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <24 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STUDENT SYMPATHY RALLY OVER ARRESTS OF NORTHERN ACTIVISTS.
TAGS: PINS, PINT, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006